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DR. DE WITT'S SERMON

BEFORE THE

AMERICAN BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

FOR

FOREIGN MISSIONS.

The Gospel Harvest, and Christian's Duty.

A

SERMON

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AT THE

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OF THE

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FOR

FOREIGN MISSIONS.

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SERMON.

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THEN SAITH HE UNTO HIS DISCIPLES, THE HARVEST TRULY IS GREAT, BUT THE LABORERS ARE FEW. PRAY YE THEREFORE THE LORD OF THE HARVEST, THAT HE WILL SEND FORTH LABORERS INTO HIS HARVEST.

THE history of the world in all ages exhibits the extended prevalence of ignorance and error, of sin and misery. The mind of the philanthropist feels oppressed with the contemplation, and naturally inquires, Shall this state of things always continue? Will the time never arrive when truth, and holiness, and peace shall pervade the earth? Philosophy, falsely so called, has speculated on the perfectibility of human nature, while, in infidel rejection of truths the most simple and sacred, she has ministered by her spirit and by her instructions to the pride and corruption of our nature. The legitimate fruit of her theories and of her practical influence appeared in that harvest of pollution and wo, which is still vivid in the remembrance of many. The humble Christian, whatever may be for the present his griefs and disappointments, cherishes the confidence that a brighter

scene will yet be unfolded through the world; a scene of blissful reality, succeeding the darkness and depravity which now abound. He believes that this will be accomplished through the word of divine truth. *He believes this*, because this truth is precisely adapted to the state and wants of human nature, as it unfolds the true character of God and man, reveals the way of salvation, prescribes a perfect rule of duty, and is accompanied by an influence adequate to subdue the heart and life to holy obedience. *He believes this*, because numerous instances are presented of its efficacy in renovating the heart and character, and thus becoming the "wisdom and power of God unto salvation." *He believes this*, in view of the numerous and emphatic promises of *Him* who is infinitely true and faithful. Promises like the following remain to be fulfilled, and claim and deserve the Christian's faith and hope:—"And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established on the tops of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills, and all nations shall flow unto it." "The glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together, for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it." "For from the rising of the sun unto the going down of the same, my name shall be great among the Gentiles; and in every place incense shall be offered unto my name, and a pure offering." "And the seventh angel sounded, and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever." *The Christian believes this,*

because the Redeemer, for his obedience unto death, is promised "the heathen for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession." Jesus now sees of the travail of his soul in the victories of his grace among men; and the full fruit of that travail will be enjoyed when the earth shall be rendered tributary to his glory, and filled with his salvation. For this purpose, exalted as Mediator, he has authority in heaven and on earth, and rules in the kingdom of providence, as well as grace, rendering all events subservient to the fulfilment of his counsels, and to the final and universal diffusion of his kingdom, which is "righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost."

The ministry of the gospel is the great instrument for accomplishing these results. "Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power." "The Lord shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion; rule thou in the midst of thine enemies." "When he ascended on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. And he gave some apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers." In organizing his church, he has committed (if we may so speak) into her own bosom the principle of her perpetuity and universal triumph. From the faithful discharge of the trust committed to her, under the blessing of God, stability and enlargement will assuredly result.

The words of our text were spoken by Jesus to his disciples as he contemplated the multitudes destitute of the means of religious instruction. "He was moved with compassion on them because they fainted, and were as sheep without

a shepherd." The compassion that dwelt in the heart of Jesus is not foreign to the hearts of his people, for they are of one spirit with him. The text,

I. Presents an argument for missionary efforts. "The harvest truly is plenteous but the laborers are few."

II. Urges a duty in reference to them. "Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth laborers into his harvest."

I. An argument for missionary efforts. "The harvest truly is plenteous, but the laborers are few." This harvest will be gathered, when the Christian religion shall universally prevail. It is well denominated *great* in view of,

1. *The field which it will cover.*
2. *The blessings it conveys.*
3. *The instrumentality it requires.*
4. *The means and prospects now furnished by Providence.*

1. It is great *in view of the field which it will cover.* "The field is the world." As yet Christianity has extended its influence to but a small part of the earth; and where that influence has been found, it has been partial in its character. Here and there a spot has appeared in some degree verdant, amid a surrounding, wide-spread, arid desert. But this desert in all its extent will be cultivated and rendered fruitful. All obstacles will be overcome, and the whole earth exhibit the triumphs of truth. Benighted, degraded, and oppressed Africa shall become enlightened, elevated, and disenthralled;—the wall of China, (like that of Jericho) shall fall at the sound

of the gospel;—the casts of the Hindoos shall be broken, and one bond in the faith and service of Christ shall unite them;—the Heathen shall every where cast their idols to the moles and to the bats, and worship the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent;—the worship of the false prophet shall cease, and the pure light and peaceful influence of Christianity shall spread over the regions where now Mohammedism exerts its sway;—the isles shall receive the law of the Lord;—all the perversions of the religion of Jesus shall be removed, and the truth shall be received in love, and exhibit its fruits wherever professed! Then shall be realized

"Scenes surpassing fable,
Yet true!—scenes of accomplished bliss!"

2. The harvest is GREAT *in view of its many blessings.* The religion of Christ blesses the life which now is, and prepares for happiness in the life to come. It exalts the intellectual character of man. It restores that balance and harmony in the intellectual and moral powers of man, which are so important in the proper cultivation of both. It corrects those prejudices, and subdues those corruptions which prevent the investigation and reception of truth. Its truths, when rightly viewed, come home to the duty, interest, and affections of all; and claim among the many proofs of their divine origin, their wonderful adaptation to the character and wants of men. It was at first a peculiar distinction of the gospel that it was "preached to the poor," and it will ever remain so; while it is the only source of spiritual instruction, and can alone instil that influence which will lead to

mental cultivation in the mass of the people. Where the gospel is not known or embraced, whatever intellectual culture may exist among a privileged few, the multitude will be found in ignorance and degradation. The spirit of Christianity has wrought itself into the frame of civil government, and in connection with the diffusion of its light and power, we trace the existence, growth, and stability of civil and religious liberty. The religion of the gospel refines and purifies the social affections, hallows the domestic scene, and while it dries up the sources of defilement and bitterness, it opens springs of pure and refreshing peace and joy in the various relations of life. Take the map of the world, and select those countries where Paganism, Mohammedism, and Popery bear sway, and let the following inquiries receive an answer. Are knowledge and intellectual cultivation generally diffused? Are civil and religious liberty enjoyed? Is the female character elevated and respected? Are the duties of domestic life discharged, and its delights mutually participated? Do purity and peace pervade the community? The negative to these inquiries appears in full view. As we take the contrast, and mark the countries where the Bible has shed its influence, we discover the blessings adverted to all following in the train.

But the religion of Christ sustains its distinguishing and commanding value as a revelation of truth and grace, and as the great instrument of our deliverance from everlasting death. The truths peculiar to it respect man's fallen and ruined state; redemption through the atoning merits of the divine Savior;

the regenerating and sanctifying influence of the Holy Spirit in restoring to that holiness "without which no man shall see the Lord." These truths, and others immediately connected with them, constitute the vitality of the religion of the gospel. Without them, its glory departs, its influence ceases, and spiritual death continues to prevail. Under their influence, the sinner, awakened and renewed, returns in penitence to his God; gratefully embraces the salvation which is in Christ Jesus; takes up feebly yet sweetly the song of redeeming love; cultivates purity of heart and life, and devotes himself, in reliance upon divine strength, to active exertions for the promotion of the divine glory, and the best interests of his fellow-men. These are the truths which give life to benevolent effort in seeking the spiritual and eternal welfare of men. When they are not cordially embraced, the wants of men as sinners, and the value of the remedy provided, cannot be duly estimated, and an awakened interest and cordial and efficient co-operation in the cause of missions cannot be expected. The history of the church clearly shows, that, whenever they have been denied or kept out of sight, there has been an indifference to the spiritual wants and interests of men, and the cause of missions has languished or died. In the first age of Christianity, the doctrine of Jesus Christ and him crucified, "to the Jew a stumbling block, and to the Greek foolishness," proved the wisdom of God and the power of God to salvation to every one that believed; and so it has proved in every age. In recent missions we find the value and efficacy of these truths witnessed by their success in ele-

vating character, promoting order and happiness, and preparing sinners for heaven. The lapse of a few years has exhibited in the South Sea Islands, the seat of British and American foreign missions, a very signal and convincing contrast in the state of knowledge, social and civil order, domestic purity and happiness, and true religion. The wisdom of the world reiterates the assertion, that it is vain to attempt to Christianize, unless we first civilize Pagan nations—that it is vain to expect their religious improvement, unless some steps are previously gained in the process of mental culture. Facts refute this theory of infidel wisdom, and evince that Christianity, while it inspires the only pure and abiding principle of benevolent effort, at the same time alone furnishes the truths which come home to the hearts and consciences of men in all ages, ranks, circumstances, and characters of life. Divine truth, imparted by Christian missions, has proved the great instrument of mental and moral as well as spiritual culture. The Moravian brethren, as if studious to select a field most fitted to test this point, chose nations most debased in ignorance, superstition, and pollution, and the result of their labors has furnished decisive evidence in this matter. This lovely band of believers have furnished an example worthy of imitation by the whole Christian world. In the smallness of their number and the feebleness of their resources, they have gone forth in the love of Christ, disregarding toils and sacrifices, and in unwearied devotion to their work, delivering the gospel message in all its simplicity and purity. In every place fruit has sprung up, honoring God and blessing

man. Had a similar spirit prevailed throughout the Christian church, and a correspondent amount of contributions and efforts been furnished, a far different aspect would have been presented. Many a field now desolate would have blossomed as the rose; and many a place now solitary would have been made glad. The spirit of the world, whether directed in the form of commercial enterprise, literary research, or projects of ambition, can never furnish the proper stimlus to benevolent effort. Commerce and science can never supply the proper means for curing the moral diseases and woes of men dwelling in darkness and sin. Philosophy ministers her lessons in vain, and employs her efforts without effect. She may irritate, but cannot cure the wound. "Leviathan is not so tamed."

When the truth of God comes with power from on high, it proves "a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart;" sets men free from the bondage of error and corruption, and places them in the liberty of truth and holiness. To learn the greatness of the harvest in the value of its blessings, we should contemplate its temporal gain in the contrast of the ignorance, error, pollution, vice, and misery, which it removes, with the knowledge, purity, peace, and happiness, which it introduces through all the relations and conditions of life. And we should contemplate its eternal gain in the contrast of the everlasting loss of the soul in ever-enduring corruption and wo under the wrath of God, with its everlasting life to the pardoned, sanctified, and saved. When the whole earth becomes filled with divine truth, great will be the harvest in the magnitude of the blessings thus secured.

3. *The harvest must appear great, in view of the instrumentality it requires.* The great result is to be accomplished by the faithful use of those means which God has in his wisdom and goodness appointed. As in the natural world, means must be used in preparation for harvest; and, as ordinarily, the product will correspond to the skill and diligence with which the means are employed; so, also, in the spiritual world, means are equally necessary; and a like correspondence in the product will exist. "It pleases God, by the foolishness of preaching, to save them that believe." "How shall they hear without a preacher; and how shall they preach except they be sent?" God will, indeed, as the latter day glory advances, open more numerous avenues, and multiply facilities for missionary labors; and will more abundantly bless them in the outpouring of his Spirit. But, at the same time, he will shed forth his Spirit into the bosom of his church, and arouse her energies for promoting the work of the Lord, by all the means within her province. Zion strengthens her stakes, and lengthens her chords at the same time. When the glory of the Lord rises upon her, she arises out of the dust, puts on her beautiful garments, and goes forth in his strength, and receives abundant increase. The necessity of a ministry well qualified in mental, literary, and spiritual endowments, thoroughly trained to become teachers and guides to the flock of Christ, and to resist the assaults of every foe, whether secret or open, is evident. The character of the ministry, in the combination of the requisite qualifications for the skilful, successful, and devoted discharge of their

work, should be equally the subject of anxious prayer and diligent attention with the increase of their number. A weak, undisciplined ministry may do injury, as well as an unsanctified one. The opinion may sometimes have been entertained and expressed, that the same qualifications are not required in the missionary going among the ignorant and degraded heathen, as in the pastor of a Christian flock intelligent and refined. The opinion is very erroneous. If, indeed, a distinction is allowed, surely the higher requirements are in the case of the missionary. Unaided by the associations and advantages which the minister enjoys in Christian society, he goes forth to build, not upon another man's foundation, but as a master-builder, to lay the foundation. What a combination of qualities are requisite for such laborers; sound, disciplined intellect, various knowledge, elevated piety, and much acquaintance with human nature; uniform meekness, unwavering courage, and unremitted devotion to his labors of love.

In advancing the kingdom of Christ, the prejudices, interests, and policy of the world rise in opposition. In what various forms, and with what power, have they hitherto appeared! What is not required in those who go forth to meet the foe, and fight for the cause of truth and holiness, with weapons which "are not carnal, but mighty through God." How plainly do we behold verified, in the condition of the world, our Saviour's declaration, "The laborers are few." In our own favored country, while, as we hope, a new spirit and new efforts are appearing in the church, still what exertions are needed to provide

and train a supply of ministers adequate to meet the wants of our waste places, our weak and destitute churches, and our rapidly extending population. We cordially greet the efforts employed for increasing the number and qualifications of ministers. And we call upon the churches for redoubled zeal and activity; for "the harvest is still great, but the laborers are few." We look over the regions of Christendom, and mark its many and extended wastes and wants. The laborers are manifestly "few." As we look farther, through the heathen world, how large and waste is the field; while, in parts remote from each other, a solitary laborer is found. The regularly ordained missionaries from the different Christian denominations, among the six hundred millions of heathen in different parts of the world, as far as ascertained, amount to about six hundred and fifty. They are in some cases aided by assistants and native teachers. Still how emphatically is the harvest great, and the laborers few: while some parts of the field are already white for the harvest.

4. *The harvest is great, in view of the means and prospects furnished by Providence.* God, in advancing his kingdom on earth, prepares the way, in arranging the events of his providence. He raises up instruments qualified for his work; and often opens the way before them, as they go forth crying, "Prepare ye the way of the Lord; make straight in the desert a high-way for our God." When the disciples were assembled, on the day of Pentecost, waiting for the promise of the Spirit, they were endued with power from on high, and the gift of tongues rested

upon them. They went forth, working miracles as a proof of their divine commission, at the introduction of the new dispensation; and with the gift of tongues fulfilling the Saviour's injunction when ascending on high, "Go ye and preach the gospel to every creature." How well was this adapted to the times and circumstances in which the apostles were placed. When, in subsequent ages, the fine gold had become dim, and the glory had departed—when religion had become united with the power and policy of state, and converted into an engine of despotism—when the Bible was confined to a few, and the maxim was enforced, "Ignorance is the mother of devotion" —when thick darkness had for centuries brooded over the nations; it pleased God signally to prepare the way for the Reformation. The art of printing had been invented; the mariner's compass was in use; the revival of letters had commenced. Luther translated the Bible into German, saying, "Let there be light;" and the press multiplied its copies. The struggle of the Reformation was in a great measure to recover Christianity from human usurpation, and to restore it to its rightful Lord. The revival of letters furnished means for elucidating the word of God, and clearing it from corruptions. In succeeding times the reformed churches fell into a deep slumber. While they "slept, the enemy sowed tares." We well remember how plenteously they sprang up. Infidelity presented a bold front, and threatened to destroy every thing sacred. In such troublous times the true people of God were revived in spirit; and as they trembled for the ark, mourned over the sins

and woes of Zion, poured forth their intercessions, and said to each other, "Let us rise and build," the pool which had become stagnant, was stirred by the Angel of the Covenant, and afforded a refreshing and vivifying influence. When reviewing the last forty years, we acknowledge, with admiring gratitude, the various institutions of Christian benevolence, which are now in harmonious operation, exerting a mighty moral influence, and furnishing facilities and means to missionaries before unknown. The Bible Society multiplies copies of the scriptures in the various languages of the world, and supplies the place of the gift of tongues.—It is needless to specify the various forms of Christian charity, which, commencing with infancy, lays the basis of a scriptural and religious education, and follows man in every course and state of life; and seeks to apply the best relief of sin, and want, and wo.

The efforts of the present day for arresting and turning back that fell destroyer, intemperance, which has annually slain its thousands and tens of thousands, and which has interposed such formidable obstacles to the success of the gospel, are of incalculable worth.

The spirit of missions, which characterizes the present period, commenced with the revival of religion in the churches. Domestic and foreign missions have grown and strengthened in connection with the power of religion. The era of foreign efforts is identified with the prosperity of religion at home.

The events which have recently transpired mark the present as an interesting crisis in the history of the world. The Christian will with care study the

page of prophecy, and the movements of Providence, and mark the light which they mutually shed on each other. Though humbly conscious that it is not for him "to know the times and the seasons, which are in the Father's hand," he will carefully watch the signs of the times, and discharge the duties to which Providence invites. By common consent it is universally admitted that the prophetic period of twelve hundred and sixty years is drawing to its close, preceding the universal prevalence of Christ's kingdom in the world. Meanwhile, momentous and interesting events must transpire in the civil and ecclesiastical world; and far mightier efforts must be employed by the church. Do we not now perceive the high and holy One "shaking not the earth only but also heaven; that by the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, those things that cannot be shaken may remain?" The Mohammedan power is declining, and "the waters of the Euphrates are drying up." The Christian colonies on the coast of Africa furnish a presage of the entire extinction of one of the foulest blots on Christendom,—the slave trade; and the regeneration of long-afflicted and degraded Africa. Papal institutions and governments, which have pressed heavily upon the interests of civil and religious liberty, are also shaken. Literature, science and true religion are extending their benign influence. The angel is flying in the midst of heaven, with the everlasting gospel. God is giving proof that his word "shall not return void." The voice of Providence, then, is, "Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee."

Such is the harvest, great in the extent of its field, in the blessings it conveys, in the instrumentality it requires, and in the means and prospects furnished by Providence.

II. The text urges our duty in relation to missionary efforts: "*Pray ye the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth laborers into his harvest.*"

The spirit of the Christian is that of love to Christ and to Zion; his life is in sincere and unreserved devotion to his Saviour's glory and Zion's prosperity. Prayer is his vital breath. In proportion as his own soul prospers will intercession constitute a leading part in his addresses to the throne of grace. It should never escape our remembrance, that of the six petitions in the summary of prayer furnished us by our Saviour, three respect the display of his glory and the extension of his kingdom on earth. "Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: they shall prosper that love thee." The discharge of the duty enjoined by our Saviour supposes,

1. *That we cherish a deep and constant sense of our dependence upon divine grace.* The private Christian, in the divine life, "is clothed with humility," lives a life of faith in the Son of God, and seeks continued supplies of the grace and help of the Spirit. So the Christian church should always be found in the attitude of leaning on her Beloved; and should realize that "all her springs are in God." "The treasure is in earthen vessels: the excellency of the power is of God." When this sense of dependence has been lost, and yielded to self-complacency and self-confidence, how often has it proved that the very

instrumentality which should have promoted the purity and growth of religion has tended to its corruption and decline. How many places once beautiful are now desolate. "They said they were enriched with goods; and they were poor." As we contemplate the spiritual building, whose base is to cover the earth, and whose top shall reach the heavens, and look forward to the time when the top stone shall be laid, with shouting, Grace, grace unto it; and at the same time consider the difficulties that attend the work, the weakness of the instruments employed, and the malice and power of opposing foes, we are ready to ask, How can this be? A voice from heaven speaks, "Who art thou, O great mountain? before Zerubbabel, thou shalt become a plain. Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit." Is there not danger, lest, in the midst of action, the church should forget the proper spring of action? Where will be the glory and value of the tabernacle, if the ark of the covenant is removed?

2. *This duty requires habitual and fervent remembrance in our private devotions.* Love to the Redeemer's cause is not a transient emotion in the Christian heart; but it is a fixed principle and growing habit of soul. "He prefers Jerusalem above his chief joy." He should then be frequent, fervent, importunate, and persevering in his intercession. Do we not greatly fail in this point? How often is Zion forgotten or remembered only with coldness? In this we may find a test of our spiritual state. In asking for personal blessings, our deceitful hearts may betray us. When, in freeness and enlargement of spirit,

we seek the good of Zion, we have the best proof that we are born from above. Oh, that from the closets and habitations of the righteous the smoke of incense, in fervent, effectual prayer, may continually ascend before the mercy-seat, as a sweet-smelling savor unto the Lord.

3. *This duty requires union in Christians.*—Addressing his assembled disciples, Jesus said, *Pray ye.* The true disciples of Jesus are united in spirit and service. The words of our Saviour's prayer are memorable; "That they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee; that they also may be *one* in us, that the world may believe that thou hast sent me." What Christian can be reluctant to engage in a service so delightful and animating, as united prayer for the coming of Christ's kingdom on earth. Who will not say, I will go also? The monthly concert observed by various evangelical denominations is greatly to be valued. Were it to inspire a deeper interest, and meet with a more general, punctual, and appropriate attendance, the fruits thereof would be manifest in our own bosom, and be seen spread around us. The first suggestion of a concert similar to this, was made to the American churches by one (President Edwards) who, "being dead yet speaketh," in the fruit of his labors, and in his writings transmitted to us, and who possessed the rare combination of the acutest and most vigorous intellect, with the most simple and tender piety. His treatise on this subject deserves most careful perusal. "On the day of Pentecost the disciples were with *one accord* in one place, continuing in prayer and supplication." It was there that the Holy

Spirit descended upon them, and they went forth and preached the Gospel of the kingdom. The same truth which they preached is committed to us;—the same Spirit which descended on them, and crowned their labors, is promised. Fervent prayer will lead to corresponding effort;—united prayer will lead to united effort. Among those who embrace the same fundamental truths which humble the sinner, exalt the Saviour, and promote holiness, there exists a diversity in smaller points which properly leads to distinct organization. Here harmony is best promoted, and strength gained, by each cherishing a sacred regard to the rights and interests of others, and rejoicing in their prosperity. It is remarked by Montgomery, that the efforts of distinct denominations in promoting the cause of religion, are like the light of the sun reflected in the rainbow, a token of peace and salvation to a lost world, while their common exertions are like the rays blended in light. While faithful in improving their particular spheres, there is a common cause in which all the servants of Christ should join: —the cause of truth and righteousness, against error and sin. When tempted by the pride of opinion, in matters comparatively unimportant, or by the clashing of selfish interests, let us, found laboring with the host of Israel, say, "I cannot come down, I am doing a great work."

4. *This duty requires the use of all proper means for suitably training laborers for the missionary field.* A suggestion has been advanced, as to the expediency of instituting a seminary or a distinct department especially designed for this object. It is worthy

of serious consideration. It is believed, that such a seminary would not only furnish greater advantages to its members, but that it would more directly, and distinctly bring the cause of foreign missions before the Christian public, and inspire a deeper interest in its favor. In our favored churches, where the Spirit's influence is enjoyed, let the subject of foreign missions be presented in just prominence. In our theological seminaries, let a careful inquiry and deep interest be cultivated and cherished among their members, who shall soon go forth, to preside in the churches of our own land, to give a tone to their sentiments and feelings, or else to enter themselves upon the glorious work.

5. *This duty requires that all the churches of Christ should systematically and efficiently aid in the promotion of the cause of missions.* It cannot be necessary to argue the duty of professed Christians to give their prayers, their property, and labors to this cause. The Christian judgment needs not be convinced, but the Christian conscience needs to be awaked, and the heart affected. Christians should learn to give, not from the impulse of momentary excitement, but from the deliberate conviction of duty, in the discharge of which the heart seeks its highest joy.—Systematically, I say, because it is to be regretted, that so many churches so readily relax their efforts, until some new impulse be given, which again soon spends itself. These are like the mountain streams, fed by sudden showers, which soon pass away. The efforts and contributions made by the enlightened judgment, and disciplined heart, are like

the majestic river, fed by living springs, which heeds not the drought of summer, but passes on, widening and deepening. It is the genuine spirit of religion, to prize and promote foreign Missions; and every proper effort to promote them advances religion at home. It is here true, as in other things,—"There is that scattereth and yet increaseth." "He that watereth shall be watered himself." And, on the other hand,—"There is that withholdeth more than is meet, and it tendeth to poverty." Where the churches are blessed with the spirit's influence, cherishing the graces of the pious, and converting sinners to Christ, there will be found free will offerings brought liberally, cheerfully, and continually, in behalf of this cause.—Look, on the other hand, to the churches indifferent to this cause, and neglectful of duty: there mildew and blasting spread, and spiritual barrenness reigns. When the churches of Christ shall harmoniously exert their energies, what, under the divine blessing, may not be accomplished?

We have reason to acknowledge, at this returning anniversary the continued favor of Providence toward this Board of Foreign Missions. Twenty years have elapsed since its organization. The circumstance of a few pious youths devoting themselves to missions among the heathen, led to its formation. It has exerted a most salutary influence on the internal state of our churches; and its continued prosperity stands identified with the glory of the church and the welfare of our nation. If there be a nation on earth more indebted to the gospel than all others, it is ours; and shall we not testify our gratitude by contributing to

extend its blessings to other nations? Every thing in our history and circumstances, reminds us of the invaluable privileges and mercies handed down by our ancestors, the puritan pilgrims and others, and the responsibility resting upon us. One theme of regret, however, presents itself, in the very considerable deficiency in the revenue of this year, compared with that of last year, while new missionary fields are opening. The march of Christian charity and munificence should be ever onward. Let every pastor present the claims of this cause prominently before the people, and feel that its prosperity is identified with the success of his labors at home. Let information be generally extended, and every means to excite interest and combine effort be employed. While in opposing the march of truth, various errors and conflicting interests combine, let the church of God arise in her strength, and in unbroken columns march onward under the banners of the great Captain, from victory to victory. While the enemy opposes and rages, we remember, "More are they that are for us, than they that are against us." God's truth is great, and must finally triumph.